

# THE GREAT MYSTERY STORY---\$2,000 PRIZES TO THE WOMEN WHO SOLVE IT.

## THE MILL OF SILENCE.

By

BERNARD EDWARD JOSEPH CAFES.

### CONDITIONS OF THE AWARD OF \$3,000.

1. To the reader from whom the Journal receives by mail at its publication office, Nassau street, New York City, the most complete and correct solution in all its details of the entire mystery in "The Mill of Silence," as it shall be disclosed in the final chapter of the story in the Journal, the sum of \$1,000 will be paid. The entire sum of \$3,000 will be divided into 150 prizes, as follows:

FOR THE FIRST BEST SOLUTION, \$1,000.  
FOR THE SECOND BEST SOLUTION, \$500.  
FOR THE THIRD BEST SOLUTION, \$300.  
FOR THE FOURTH BEST SOLUTION, \$100.

In awarding the prizes there will be no change in the above table, either as respects the number of prizes given or the amount of each prize.

2. The Journal is pre-eminently a family newspaper, and its daily installment of a high-grade serial story is a feature intended specially to commend it to the home circle. To emphasize and advertise the fact that the Journal is a newspaper particularly suitable for women's reading, the further condition is made that the \$3,000 in prizes shall be paid only for explanations sent in by WOMEN and GIRLS. All may read, but only WOMEN and GIRLS may have the prizes.

"The Mill of Silence" will continue in daily installments until Thursday, May 28, on which date all but the final chapter will have been published. The interval between Thursday, May 28, and Friday, June 5, will be devoted to the solution of the mystery. The final installment of the story, disclosing the mystery, will be published in the Journal, Monday, June 8.

### RULES OF THE COMPETITION.

1. But ONE solution may be entered by any one reader. All guesses must be sent by mail and in no other way, plainly addressed to "Prize Story Editor, THE JOURNAL, Nassau street, New York City."

2. Solutions not considered fully answered here will be answered in THE JOURNAL, if the inquiries are addressed to "The Prize Story Editor," and accompanied by a two-cent stamp or postal card.

3. The \$3,000 will be awarded under the conditions and rules here set forth, and according to the best judgment of the judges appointed by THE JOURNAL, and these judges will have complete control and final decision beyond all appeal in all matters relating to this contest, and all "solutions" will be received and judged subject to this provision.

4. The guesses may be made in the reader's own words, in the English language, and without any attempt at "fine writing" and without using the words of the story as a guide. The guesses must disclose the mystery and such material facts of the plot revealed in the development of the story as to the full explanation of the mystery in its details.

5. Names and addresses of the winners of the \$3,000 in cash prizes will be published in THE JOURNAL at the earliest possible date after the judges have determined the awards.

6. No consideration of terms of subscription to THE JOURNAL is imposed. Guessers must be women and girls, and necessarily they must be readers of THE JOURNAL, but they may read the story in THE JOURNAL taken by any member of the family, and need not be regular subscribers themselves in order to enter the competition. While only women and girls may guess and win the prizes, they may receive help in their guessing from any or all members of the family.

### Chap. LIII.—An Attempt and a Failure.

For a minute or more I must have stood gazing down at the damning words, unmoving, breathless almost. Then I glanced at the quiet face on the pillow and back again to the tablet I held in my hand.

Could I believe it even now—now with the confession there in black and white before me? Before me, as I had seen it in the room, and Dr. Crackenhorpe, that I had held so foul, were after all justified by facts? A quiet worse man than my head had so long secretly condemned, and accept this father of mine and of Modred for the criminal?

Yet I was glad to know—proud in the little pride I may call mine—that at that supreme moment I stood stanch; that I tried to my power to do my duty. The very thing I never did it! That I dashed the tablet back upon the bed and that my one overwhelming thought was to get away from this poor soul from himself!

That he might die in peace with his conscience—that was the end of my desire. Yet how was I, knowing so little to convince him? How could a man with simple words of trust and belief poured into a nearly deaf ear? Diagon I had none, but only assurance of sympathy and a moral certainty that a nature so constituted could never lend itself to so horrible a deed.

For long I paced the room backward and forward, seeking to quiet the tumult in my brain, groping and searching for some outlet whereby to escape the problem of impotency to help.

In the midst of my confusion of thought a sudden idea woke in me and quickened into a resolve. I went swiftly out of the room, down the stairs, and walked in upon old Peggy muffled in her blanket and in the kitchen. I was going out for a while, I told her, and bade her listen for any sound upstairs that might betoken uneasiness on the part of the patient.

For the time being there was no rain to greet me as I stepped outside, but the wind still blew violently from the east, and the sky was all drawn and wrapt in a doleful swathe of cloud. In the air, too, was a smell of cold, bracing water; for all the valleys about were glazed with it and all the streams of Winton fell to the throat with its icy yelling.

With ready and without hesitation I thrust my hand into the pocket of Dr. Crackenhorpe, an austere, cross-looking servant girl was polishing with remnants of the handle of the front door with a tattered doorknob glove.

"Is the doctor inside?" I said to her. She left the glove sticking on her handle like a frisky knocker, and stood upright looking down upon me.

"That do you want with him?" she said. "I wish to see him on private business."

"He's at his breakfast. He won't think you for troubling him now."

"I don't want him to thank me. I wish to see him, that's all."

"Well, then, you can't—and that's all!" I mumbled, passing and walking into the hall, and she followed me, clanking.

The ugly voice I knew well called from

a back room I had not yet been into.

"What's that?" I turned the handle and walked in. He was seated before a stained and dented tray of copper, and a great slice of toast from which he had just bitten a jagged semi-circle was in his hand.

"He passed, with the piece in his mouth, and coughed up at me in astonishment. He is practically a dead man, I tell you."

"Why do you adopt this attitude to me, then?" I asked. "You have an eye to a particular sort of fact?"

"Perhaps I wanted proof that the old man was past leaving town. A wicked smile wrinkled his mouth. 'Perhaps I satisfied myself he was, and from you I expected no consideration or justice.'"

"You can leave that out of the question. It's a foul word in your mouth. Consideration from me, in your sense, you would never get. A more business contract is another matter, and that is what I came to propose."

"Oh, indeed?" "With a sneer, but moved nevertheless nearer the table, so that we could talk without raising our voices."

"He said the nature of this stupendous contract?" "I will tell you without asking. I make you this offer to hand over to you all that remains of the treasure on one condition."

"And that is?" "That you tell me how my brother Modred came to his death."

"He gave a little start; then dropped his eyes, frowning and grinning with his hands on the table. I saw that he understood no party; that he was groping in his mind for some evasion—some alibi course, whereby he could satisfy all parties and secure the prize for himself."

"Your father didn't do it," he was beginning, but I took him up at the outset. "You know he didn't! It's a foul lie of such a man, Dr. Crackenhorpe—my voice despite my stubborn resolve, broke a little."

"He is lying there on his deathbed, despairing, haunted with the thought that it was he who, in a fit of drunken madness, strangled the life in his own son. It is all hideous—monstrous—unnatural. You know more about it, I believe, than any man. You were sitting with him that night."

"But he left me awfully." "You know it wasn't in his nature to do such a thing."

"Pardon me. I have always looked upon your father as a dangerous, reckless fellow. His instincts may at one time have pointed in the right direction, but some warped, some early grievance, at which he more than once hinted vaguely to me—undoubtedly, I suppose, I inherited it."

"You have a rude, boorish insistence of your own," he cried at me hotly. "But I suppose I must value it for what it's worth. It's the custom to ask a fee for professional services."

"You volunteered yours, you know." He shrugged his shoulders. "Quite so," he said. "The matter lies with you."

"With you, I think. In visiting my father the other night you had no secret hope, I suppose, that he should pay you for the sort of coin you have already had too much of?"

"I don't appeal to your charity or your

"You insult me, sir." "I assure you. Will you answer me one question? Is there the remotest chance of my father recovering from this attack?"

"Not the remotest—not of his definitely rallying even, I should say."

"Is that only an opinion?" "No! Miracles don't occur in surgery. He is practically a dead man, I tell you."

"Why do you adopt this attitude to me, then?" "You have an eye to a particular sort of fact?"

"Perhaps I wanted proof that the old man was past leaving town. A wicked smile wrinkled his mouth. 'Perhaps I satisfied myself he was, and from you I expected no consideration or justice.'"

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"With you, I think. In visiting my father the other night you had no secret hope, I suppose, that he should pay you for the sort of coin you have already had too much of?"

"I don't appeal to your charity or your

mercy. There's a rich reward awaiting you if you tell what you know and ease the old dying man's mind. Further than that—if you withhold the truth and let him pass in his misery, I swear that I'll never rest till I've dragged you down and destroyed you."

"He moved his body in a mocking and an unmeaning bow."

"I really can't afford to temporize with my conscience for any one living or dead. As it is I have serious qualms over not having denounced him whom I considered the actual criminal. Practically I have allowed myself to slip into the position of an accomplice, which is an extreme concession on my part of friendly patronage toward a family that has certainly never studied to claim my good offices."

I looked at him gloomily. I could not believe even now that he would dismiss me without some effort toward the prize that he saw almost within his grasp, and I was right.

"Still," he went on, "I don't claim infallibility for my deduction. It would be an immense relief to me to find proof that my suspicions were unfounded. I shall be pleased, if you wish it, to return your aid, if possible, to question the patient."

I was too anguished and distraught to refuse, even though I had no doubt that the hints I was in that at the last moment the sight of that stricken figure at home would be a relief to me.

He bade me wait in the hall while he finished his breakfast, and I had nothing for it but to go and sit down under the row of smoky prints.

He kept me a deliberate while, and then came forth leisurely and domineeringly, as if he were some one of the great lords of the world, and sat down under the row of smoky prints.

Together we set forth, and he talked quite gaily in his shrill, glib voice, as if there could be nothing nearer my interest than the abnormal weather and the swollen water courses.

The mill greeted us with no jarring thunder as we entered its door, for the discord of its phantasm grinding had long since ceased.

I listened as we climbed the wooden stairs for any sound from the room above, but only the echo of our footfalls reverberated in the lonely house.

No! Modred's body I had seen, but when I pushed open the door of my father's room, there she was standing by his bed and leaning over it.

At the noise of our entrance she twisted her head, gave a sort of sudden peevish cry and tumbled upon the floor in a collapsed heap, the tablet from the bed in her hand.

Chapter LIV.—A Last Confession.

I thought that the old woman, startled by our entrance, had merely stepped back, tripped, and so come to the floor. The doctor, however, boasted that much of the doctor's office, he knew better.

He uttered an exclamation, ran to the prostrate figure, and called me to bring a spongel of water from the sink and wash her head.

When I had complied I saw that the ancient limbs were rigid, the teeth set, the lips foaming slightly. Peggy was in an epileptic fit and that, at her age, was no light matter.

I feared that her struggles might presently wake my father, who was to all appearance sleeping peacefully, and asked the doctor if it would not be possible to move her at the outset to another room.

He shook his head, but gave long answers. Suddenly I was conscious that the eyes were fixed not upon the sufferer but upon the tablet in her hand, crooked fingers, and that in my distraction I had not erased the damning words that were traced thereon.

On the wall, as I stood and stared, the old woman's hand was up to her neck. Her sick eyes were moving from the one to the other of us in a lost, quivering way.

I leaned over to her. She was struggling to speak, I could see, and a mortal fear was straining for outlet.

"In the face of such infatuation," he was beginning, when a sound from the bed stopped him, started and turned. The old woman's hand was up to her neck. Her sick eyes were moving from the one to the other of us in a lost, quivering way.

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and wings his way out when his own moment comes. Death is no wanton sharp-shooter from the thicket. He is as much a part of us as our marrow, and the measure of his proximity to nerve centres is the measure of our pain when he escapes. He breaks forth, not into us.

Turning from that old fallen stump, Dr. Crackenhorpe suddenly faced me, a smile on his cracked lips.

"So," he said, "on the top of that confession you sought to convince me against your own judgment?"

"I haven't a thought to deny it. I value it at nothing. He has died on a baseless charge, at your instigation, yes, you needn't lie till his mind is sick with disease. What does it matter? I know him, and I stake my soul on his innocence."

asked you to ease his mind, not mine. Somehow you are involved in the mystery. If men could speak from the grave, George White would shake your evil soul, I swear."

"Still," he went on, "I don't claim infallibility for my deduction. It would be an immense relief to me to find proof that my suspicions were unfounded. I shall be pleased, if you wish it, to return your aid, if possible, to question the patient."

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